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The Student Journal of Art and Literature

Calliope

The Student Journal of Art and Literature
Volume XVI - Spring 2019

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calliope *kal<e>i:opi. U.S. (Gr. Kallioph)*

(beautiful-voiced), the ninth of the Muses,
presiding over eloquence and heroic poetry.

1. An instrument consisting of a series of
steam-whistles toned to produce musical notes,
played by a keyboard like that of an organ;

2. attrib. calliope hummingbird,
a hummingbird, sellula ***calliope***, of the
Western United States and Mexico.
Oxford English Dictionary

Calliope First Prize 2019 - Artwork

Nuran Cicek

Playtime

Photograph

Calliope First Prize 2019 - Poetry

Daniel Dutcher

Echoes

All present is but echo, echo, echo…
A silhouette, a suggestion of a dream,
A moving shore where all that ever is,
Or was, is echo, echo, echoing...

What rare breath, then, of distant stars does dust
This lattice to which my essence binds?
What waning wish of ancient men wells up
And flecks this self - these words, these thoughts, this mind?

And on such terms, how to delineate
One's Self from Star, and Man, and Being?
And live brace and sure enough to brave
This life - this echo, echo, echoing…

What queer and crazed and wondrous creatures, we,
Who thrive within, against, infinity.

Calliope Second Prize 2019 - Artwork

David Lam

Longing For the Past

Acrylic

Calliope First Prize 2019 - Nonfiction

Marina Kessenich

The Kitchens

When my children think back to the mother of their childhood, what will come to mind?

Smiling in the kitchen, the stereo plays mommy lullabies in the form of Hobo Johnson or the Killers. Maybe the soft voice of Emma Messenger narrating Jane Eyre or a newsclip from public radio. There is always noise as she flips two over easy eggs.

14 eggs a week.

She carefully outlines her eyes with black pencil, hair still wet from the shower, black dress hugging…a slim body? a thick body? She never opened her mouth while she put on mascara. She hugs us goodnight as she leaves to go out with friends or A Friend.

They won't register why or exactly what it is, but when they bite into certain sweet foods they'll be taken back to the kitchen, to all of the kitchens (which one will they remember best?) warmed by the preheating oven, stirring the ingredients together.

Mom snaps at us not to make a mess.

("Mom snapped a lot", they'll tell their therapist).

Cinnamon, they'll smell it or taste it and they'll think of being children; cinnamon in the hot chocolate, the applesauce, the chocolate chip cookies.

Mom would eat the entire batch of chocolate chip cookies while we slept.

"Mom had a dessert problem".

One cookie sent her down the rabbit hole.

When they think back on how I made them feel, will they feel confidently loved? The warm affection bestowed by a mother who slept in; who opened the kitchen window to let in a warm, sunny day; who felt refreshed by a night out with friends or A Friend. Will they have caught on to the fact that, in my darkest moments, isolated, drained, tired, and worn thin…I hated them. A lioness, ragged and starved, resorting to emotional cannibalism. Maybe those moments were fleeting enough to go unnoticed.

The boy might never understand. But the girl, as she fulfills her inflicted (inflicted

by whom?) maternal destiny...she'll understand.

Then again maybe not.

Maybe I'll have done okay by her.
Maybe she'll do okay by herself.

In the middle of Winter they'll be at some commercial cafe or restaurant, the Panera of 2040...something. They'll order soup and remember their favorite meal growing up:

Mom would make the broth from scratch. Bones, peels, herbs and spices. She would make the house smell like onions, then sausage.You could hear them spitting in the oven. We would rip the kale into pieces, methodically, rhythmically, ritualistically, and she would fold it in amongst the white beans and carrots, it would wilt and transform…

"Double double toil and trouble…"

A once mystical, now cartoonish in retrospect, incantation and suddenly the whole house found kale delectable.

The closest mom ever was to a witch, aside from every single Halloween.

Every October.

"Whisk Look out for the old woman
with the wart on her nose
what she'll do to yer
nobody knows…"

Hist Whist by E.E. Cumings.

We read it all year.

Will you remember how we laid in bed and said our Atheist prayers of gratitude and self love? And before I left you with a, sometimes rushed and sometimes cherished, hug and kiss, I sang, most frequently, a modern lullaby that he called Lady and she correctly called "No Buses". And as I sang that song you didn't know, but maybe one day you'll stumble across this truth during some random musing, that the words made me wonder who you would love and who would hurt you, who you would hurt. I wondered when the day would come, if ever, that the words would comfort you not only because you heard them in your mother's raw, unfiltered voice but because you felt them in your aching heart.

"Lady, where's your love gone?
I was looking but can't find it anywhere…"

"Why did mom chose this song as a lullaby?" you wonder during your musings.

I was 19 and sang it to the first of you in my belly. I had given up learning to knit, one way of becoming a good mother, doing a motherly thing, but I could sing a lullaby, that was a motherly thing. This song was simple, pleasing, tasted sweet on my tongue, and I knew it well enough to memorize it quickly once I made the goal to be a mother who sang to her babies. It's our song now, the three of us.

Will it still be our song when you eat soup at the Panera-like restaurant in 2040 something?

Will you remember how the boom of every step I took up the staircase became deeper, louder, more warlike each time I had to check on you past the maternal witching hour of 8pm? My voice would rise, dark magic used to scare you into obedience.

"...for she knows the devil ooch
the devil ouch
the devil
ach…"

Wrath increasing exponentially with each ascent.

And will you remember that I made you your own playlists? Songs we could all stand, but you especially liked. Will you one day realize how dark Chop Suey was for two kids under the age of 7 to sing and shake along to in the car?

"Why'd you leave the kids up on the table"!?

Will you like the color black as much as I do?

Mom would take us on adventures; to museums, mountains, monuments, and so much more. But she was a one star general and we were the lowest of enlistees. She would take us to the most haunting, magical, ethereal sculpture garden in rural Washington "but you better listen up maggots and do what I say, do you understand me"?! And if we fell out of line, she herself could embody the VC.

Mom danced with us in the kitchen, her in her denim mini skirt, large framed glasses, and red, bleach stained sweater with the banana on it, something to do with some really old band. "Was that dad's hat she was wearing? Months after she left him"?

"Those were people who died, died".

Mom would grab our hands and spin with us, throw us "up, up, up" in the air.

"Those were people who died, died".

We would listen to the same song of the week, over and over. Maybe Against Me! covering some old band, not the banana band.

"Those were people who died, died".

And it would keep going until one of us got hurt and the other angry.

"Those were people who died, died".

Mom would roll her eyes,

"They were all my friends…"

frustrated.

"they just died".

How many kitchens will you remember? Chase Commons, Ticonderoga Ct., Ruby, Pender Creek (where the second of you came from the water in the bedroom down the hall), Ticonderoga Ct. again, Chanda Heights, Martin Dr., Ama's kitchen…how many more kitchens? Will they meld together in your dreams? Will you ever know stability?

My grandmother's painting of the Jabberwocky followed us to each new address.

"'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe…"

You won't remember, but you both took your first steps in the kitchen, the same kitchen, the 1st and 2nd time we lived at Ticonderoga. You walked from me to your father. Was that foreshadowing? Will you sup nightly from his kitchen one day? Will his kitchen be as lively?

"All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe".

I hope, that one day, when you're prompted to share a memory of me, preferably long before any eulogy, you find yourself saying:

"I remember my mother as she stood in the kitchen,
the cackle of a good witch,
framed by a smile,

(her Cheshire grin)
reverberated through the walls,
through our souls,
as she bounced to some beat and wiped up the cinnamon we had spilled on the counter".

"Hist whist
little ghostthings."

Against Me! Lyrics to "People Who Died."
https://www.google.com/amp/s/genius.com/amp/Against-me-people-who-died-lyrics

Arctic Monkeys. Lyrics to "No Buses."
https://www.google.com/amp/s/genius.com/amp/Arctic-monkeys-no-buses-lyrics

Carol, Lewis. "Jabberwocky."
https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/42916/jabberwocky

Cummings, E.E. "Hist Whist."
https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/53525/hist-whist

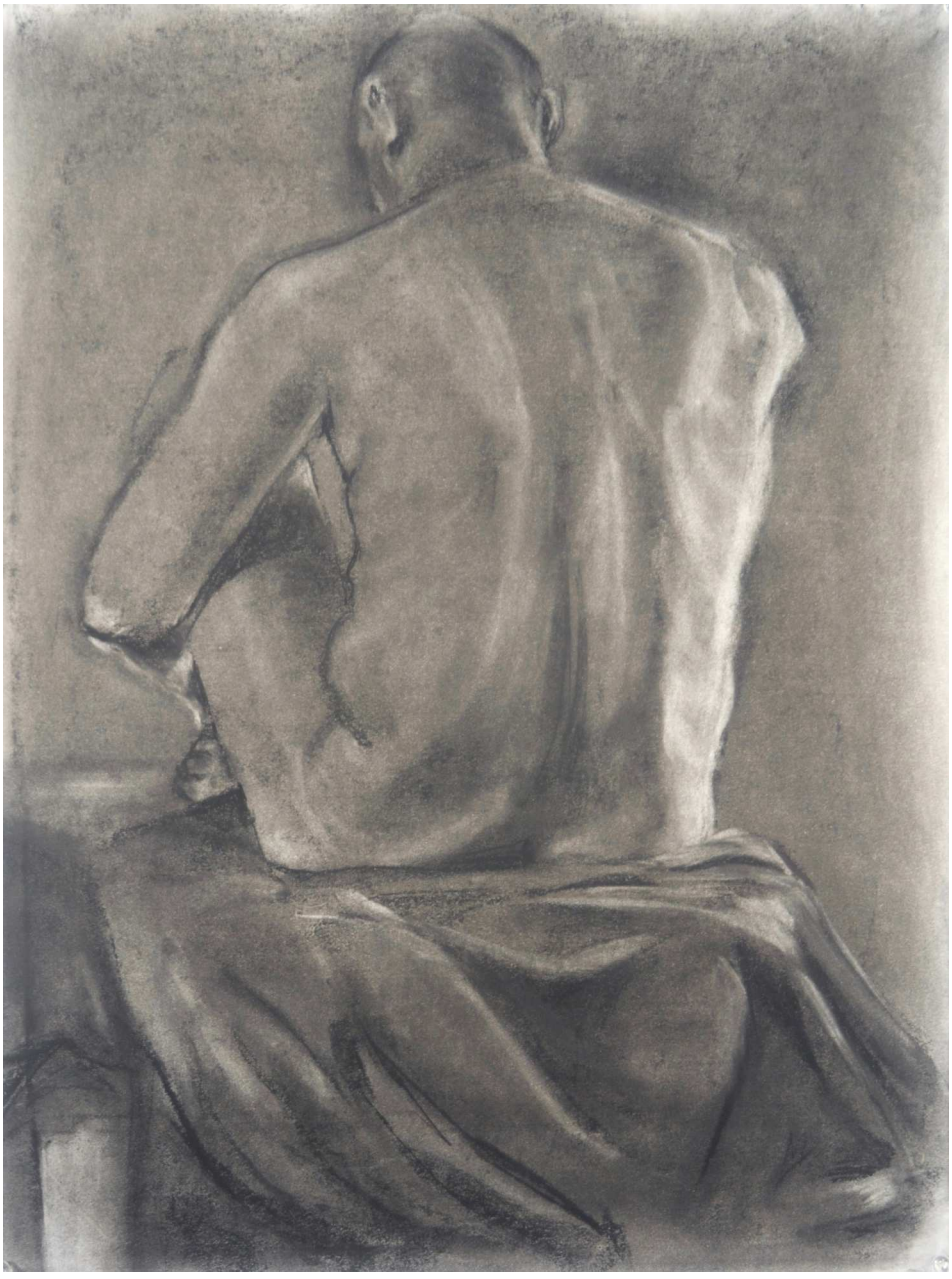
Shakespeare, William. "Song of the Witches: 'Double Double Toil and Trouble'."
https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43189/song-of-the-witches-double-double-toil-and-trouble

System of a Down. Lyrics to "Chop Suey."
https://www.google.com/amp/s/genius.com/amp/System-of-a-down-chop-suey-lyrics

Calliope Third Prize 2019 - Artwork

Evelyn Garcia

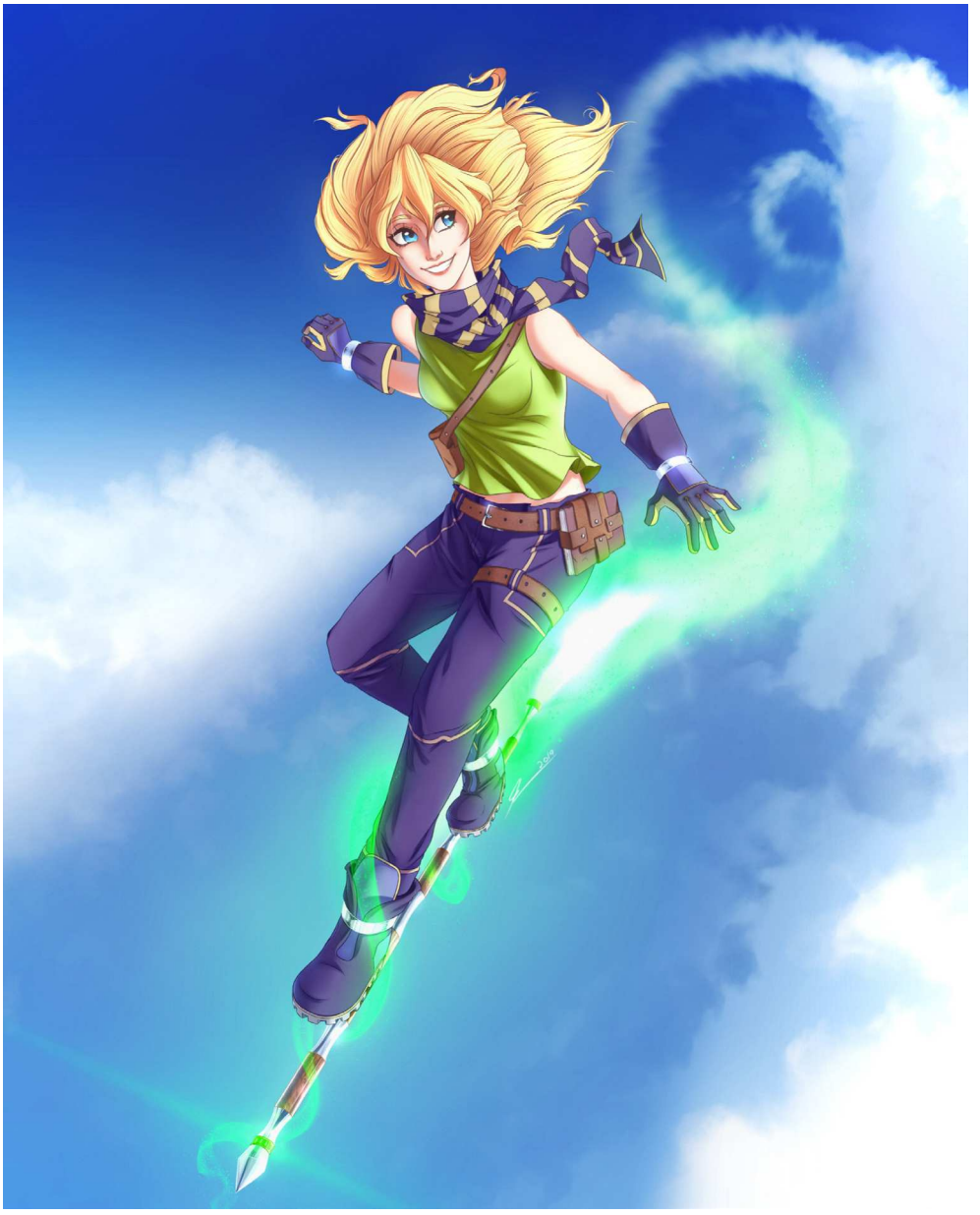
Man



Charcoal

Tanner White

Open Skies



Digital Art

Francine Sin

Self-Portrait

Paper Cutout

Calliope First Prize 2019 - Fiction

Luis Quiroga

Firmament

From this side

The girl and her mother staggered in the middle of the immense nocturnal valley, illuminated only by the lunar night. The thin hand of the mother held tightly the minute hand of her daughter, like a chain link that pulled the poor infant whose feet were outraged by the tempestuous trail. The steps of the girl, small but accelerated, barely equaled the pace of her mother´s footsteps. Frightened and tired, she no longer wanted to repeat the question because the answer promised to be the same: "Almost there, sweetheart."

When they got out of the smuggler´s vehicle that night, with tears in her confused eyes, the girl heard her mother was told that they only needed to walk half an hour to cross the border and continue their journey in another car which was waiting for them.

They didn´t cease walking, but the half hour prolonged itself cruelly and their clothes hardly defended them from the inclemency of the cold. The girl wore green pants and a pink jacked, both stained with brown dust that once rode the back of the camels. The mother was a tall, long figure, completely covered by black clothes. She carried a backpack that contained some empty cans of tuna, plastic sugar bags, and one chocolate biscuit. The girl had lost the only pair of gloves they could get before leaving that morning, and the mother could not convince a soul to give her a new pair.

The girl´s hood left her face uncovered, where a pair of wide eyes shone with long lashes that covered them like an eave. Her prominent eyelids covered with each blink the two round obsidians that floated in their respective ponds of milk. Without lifting her head, she raised her gaze towards the starry sky. Her eyes were moving and looking for any star that could fall on them.

During the bombings, she and her parents hid in in the hallway of their house. The frenzied explosions shook all the walls and the cells in their bones. One of the children with whom she shared the trip a few days ago confessed her that he had seen the bombs fall, and in his simple infantile lexicon, he described them as fireballs that fell from the sky. The girl was terrified in silence because she remembered of some TV show where she heard that the stars were fireballs.

While her feet moved a little slower than at the beginning, and she was overwhelmed by the cold and the dust, her eyes scrutinized the sky. As the minutes passed, and the stars remained static, the girl felt the confidence to raise her head and see the empyreal sky directly. She saw a sea of abundant white pigments that made the night radiant. Her pupils raised to her forehead and found three stars especially aligned like no other. She continued observing to find a similar pattern, but rather she saw that those three stars formed a kite´s tail.

The girl remembered that her dad used to tell her they would fly kites for half an

hour in the park if she finished all the vegetables on her plate. Then the girl procured a reminiscence to extract herself from that site until they could find the next car in half an hour.

She made the utmost effort to include every second in her mental picture. She remembered her feet coming down the stairs of her house, her hands reaching up to open the door and walking on the street, holding her father´s hand. She remembered how once in the park, her father unrolled the tail of the comet and gave her the tassel, and how after she ran, she looked the white blue kite flying high. She remembered the warm breeze that caressed her face and blew her ears.

The pocket of her jacket was useless. Her little fingers of her left hand did not know where to escape from the gelid pain, four of them could only find shelter by shrinking and clinging with the nails that pinched the skin of her palm. The thumb embraced the other fingers like a mother who protects her family. The half hour never arrived, or it had already arrived not to find them. The girl did not stop seeing the kite of stars, she did not want to lose it so she can show it to her dad when they meet again. For the next few minutes, the girl was fascinated by the discovery she made and knew that everyone would be fascinated too. While her small and sore feet stepped on sharp stones in the soil, her deep eyes flew a kite in the sky.

The frozen air invaded her nostrils, burned her throat and made her disoriented alveoli suffer. Her breath abandoned her mouth like the smoke of locomotive in motion. Breathing hurt and life escaped with each exhalation. “Mom, my feet hurt a lot.” The mother stopped again, and they sat on the ground. She hugged her daughter and tried to protect the child´s face against her own chest.

After a few minutes, both were lying on the floor. The girl´s eyes looked at the kite for the last time and then turned to her mother´s ones, they were lost. The girl´s arms that felt more the caliber of fatigue than of pain, embraced her mother with her hands still made fists. The embrace pressed the two bodies together and the girl accompanied her mother in eternal sleep. The stars of the kite stared solemnly at the scene, two dots in the middle of a carpet of earth, still lit by the moonlight, inert. They asked themselves: why?

From the other side

Since the fortuitous appearance of humanity, the stars were no longer distracted by the chaos and harmony that decorated the universe and turned their eyes to the opulent sphere painted with vital blue.

In the same fashion they were observed, the stars observed humanity. They discovered patterns and baptized constellations of scattered human domains that looked like incandescent moles when they were on the dark side of the planet.

One of the spectacles that most fascinated them was the multitudinous exodus that replicated itself over the centuries in different corners of the world. They discovered that some regions of the world attract people as the gravity of planets attracts the desolate bodies of space. Caravans of men, women and children lined up like an asteroid belt that went on leaving a trail of lost lives and tears that ended up scurrying alone towards the seas.

The stars examined with perplexity the fiery flashes that begun to take place in some regions of the world. The sparks exploded as nebulae hatching, but instead of creating a beautiful illusion of expanding fluorescent ink drops, they created a black hole that destroyed without respite all the works that humans themselves had built as a home. From those scorched voids, the survivors dissipated like spores escaping misery.

Up in the sky, Ursa Major used to accompany besieged people and shined as much as she could, hoping to help them like that. That night, Ursa's eyes met the eyes of the girl, which shone like two albino stars. At the end of the brief hours of interstellar company, Ursa contemplated the two dim dots in the middle of the marmoreal vastness of that valley, until they disappeared by hiding on the other side of the planet.

Austyn Dingus

Collage Painting

Acrylic

Jinghui Juo

Effects of Smartphones

If you had a chance to travel to another time in history, what would you think about at first? A person you want to see, a famous place you are interested in, or a mysterious event you would like to research? For me, I want to ask, "Can I take my smartphone?" It didn't exist in the past, but it's so useful and has so many functions.

The first reason I couldn't leave my smartphone behind is that we almost depend on it. It helps us keep in touch, receive messages that come from our friends, and it makes working and studying so convenient, especially for international students and workers. Popular messaging apps like WeChat ignore time zones to link people around the world. Anytime and anywhere, people can send messages to others.

Also, the smartphone was invented to have multiple functions, such as a TV, a watch, a camera, maps, games, and even a computer. It's kind of a necessity in our lives. Actually, it really makes our life effective. In the software store, we can download multiple tools. For studying, it's not only a dictionary, but also a way to do online class. There is health software that organizes people's daily exercise. There are apps to order food, share recipes, and teach people how to cook. For business, online meetings can be done on phones, which can potentially save money on travel.

There are so many reasons why smartphones are useful. However, every coin has two sides. Smartphones also cause people spiritual and physical problems. The more a person uses smartphones, the less time a person has to communicate in real life. We can find some cases in our own lives: a couple goes to a coffee shop, order a drink, and only look at their phone until they leave. What is the point of this kind of date? If some people give up their smartphone, they will feel isolated. Additionally, looking at smartphones at night too much can cause eye damage. They can also cause sleep problems, because don't sleep on time because of playing on our phones.

In my opinion, it is the user's responsibility to use any excellent thing, no matter what problem it also causes. Life and society will always be improving. We can't give up smartphones, but we can learn to avoid their problems. We can use smartphones to make our lives more convenient, and to organize our lives better and better.

Calliope Second Prize 2019 - Poetry

Kyle Edwards

Out Went the Light

Amongst those merry fires and such hot burning hearths
A small candle flickers but is a flame nonetheless
Partnered hearts the creators of these lights in the dark

Some fires roar hot, their flames entwine and caress
Glowing and vibrant obviously everyone sees
Red and orange hands hold, as they dance with finesse

Other fires burn low and painfully drop their degrees
Great promise to memory as flames die slowly to charcoal
Their remains dark as night, leaving black embittered debris

But this single candle stands hopeful, young but with sparkle
Despite its small breadth, it seems time's test it would pass
A miracle of nature, its most beautiful marvel

Then suddenly, without warning, fingers pinch out the light
Too simply, too easily, the candle's hope was betrayed
No slow dimming like others, that writhed and perished in fight

A sentence enough, delivered so awkward that day
These two fingers were so quick, so merciless, so forthright
The candle was snuffed and with nothing left went away

Once a candle had burned, one so small yet still bright
'Til two fingers closed softly, and out went the light

Sara Menjivar

Collage Painting

Oil on Canvas

Calliope Second Prize 2019 - Nonfiction

Margaret Vu

On Math and Mammaries

Amy has twenty oranges. She gives one-fifth of her oranges to Brad, one-fourth to Jack, and one-half to Alan. What is the square root of the number of oranges Amy has left?

I, too, was pondering this dilemma, posed to me across the tired length of a public-school chalkboard, when a hand crept across the middle of my back and caused me to jump.

The hand belonged to a boy named Jordan and lay there revoltingly, like a particularly unappetizing slab of meat flung onto a butcher's block, or perhaps a dead fish along the beach. It flopped around on my back, grasping at my T-shirt, before its owner announced, "Hey, Margaret's not wearing a bra!"

I recoiled, snapping my back into a perfectly straight posture that would have made Captain von Trapp proud. "Of course I'm wearing a bra, stupid," I lied. "Don't touch me."

Jordan began dancing around in a ridiculous sort of jig, hiking his knees up past his waist, singing, "No bra! No bra! No bra!" The teacher, a short-tempered old woman who believed children were cretins, fixed him with a glare.

"Sit down," she snapped. "Stop talking and get to work."

When Jordan had collected himself, and my ears stopped burning like I'd shoved my head in the oven, I resumed my focus on the problem. Amy has twenty oranges. She gives one-fifth of her oranges to Brad—

"I didn't feel a bra," came the smug whisper. "How can you be wearing a bra if I didn't feel one?"

I tapped my pencil, wanting to seem engrossed in my calculations, which had thus far materialized on my paper in the form of twenty plump cartoon oranges in a stunning wicker basket. Brad, Jack and Alan stood off to the side, tapping their feet, stick arms outstretched.

"It's in the laundry today," I hissed back. "But I always wear it." Jordan wasn't listening; he'd graduated to flicking Cindy's pencil while she was writing. With each flick, she rolled her eyes and proceeded to erase the jagged line he'd made erupt from her neat, block-style writing. "Jordan, stop." She caught my eye and flashed a grimace, the sort you give a cashier at the mall when they comment mawkishly on whatever you've brought up.

My ears started burning again. The oranges lay forgotten.

Amy was pissed now.

"Like, how many do I have left?" She glared at Brad, Jack and Alan angrily; they cowered. "God!"

That day, I arrived home and promptly shut myself in my room. When my mother

got home from work, she found me in front of the mirror in a pink tank top, hips thrust back, chest puffed out like a strange, sickly bird. "What on earth are you doing?" she said, horrified.

"A bra," I said severely. "I need one." A pause. "Please."

My mother's silence couldn't mask her discomfort. "Sure," she said slowly, as if chewing her words, "a bra. I guess it's about that time. Sure."

I was the only girl in the family, as was she in hers, and the nuance this introduced I'd come to know the first time I'd mentioned having a crush on a boy, in second grade. "Oh," she'd offered lamely. "Well, you go get 'em." Not sure what this meant, I went on to annihilate him in Native American jeopardy, and when he cried (and subsequently peed), I found that I'd just gotten over my first crush.

"Yes. A bra." I patted my chest, as if I thought her confused with some other type of bra—perhaps for knees, or elbows. As an afterthought, I added, "Every girl in my class wears one."

Her nose wrinkled. "How can you possibly know that?"

I sighed. My mother and Amy would have gotten along, I thought. I pictured them counting oranges under a tree, scowling at passerby and asking impossible questions.

"Cindy wears one," I said matter-of-factly, not making eye contact. She bristled.

"Well, then, certainly."

We piled reluctantly into the Odyssey and set off for Target. I'd dispensed with the tank top and opted for a more business-casual striped jumper—classy, dignified, something that didn't scream "I Am a Bra Virgin!" I held my head high as we entered the store, the automatic doors croaking out a half-hearted greeting. Walking into the intimates' section, I was reminded of the feeling I'd had when my brothers had accidentally thrown a ball into a neighboring gated community and I'd been made to sneak in and retrieve it. This land was just as foreign to me: airbrushed sirens leered down from posterboard thrones, their perfect blond tresses curled like tentacles over lacy white straps. "We've Got You Covered," they taunted anyone who dared look.

You'd better, I thought.

I spent the next thirty minutes holed up in a dressing room. My mother had, at first, stationed herself obediently just outside as I peppered her with questions about cup sizes and itchy tags and why bras looked so fancy if they were just supposed to go under your clothes. When I became fixated on the absurdity of lace ("Why does it have to be pretty? It's not like anyone will ever see it"), she muttered something about needing to go look at birthday cards.

"Grandma's got one coming up, remember? It'll just take a minute."

There was an ounce of guilt creeping into her voice that I've seldom heard since. Grandma's birthday was in two months.

"Fine," I sighed. "But this is totally nuts." The floor around me was littered with bras of every color and pattern known to woman.

I succumbed to a gray sports bra, mostly because it lacked the death traps that were adjustable straps and underwires, but also because it flattened my chest and restored some shred of pre-pubescence. I found my mother scrolling through her phone near

"First Communion."

"I'm ready to go," I announced, holding up my catch. She seemed relieved by this decision and made a beeline for the checkout while I scurried off to snag another pair in the same color. I felt oddly satisfied, despite the ridiculousness of the whole thing. When we got home, my parents greeted each other with a baffling exchange of raised eyebrows. I bounded upstairs to try the bra on under every shirt I owned, making a complete zoo of my bedroom and impatiently dismissing my brothers' questions, hollered from the other side of the door. My mother, joining the chorus, told me to stop getting the thing sweaty, wasn't I going to wear it tomorrow?

"I don't even sweat that much, Mom," I said wisely. There was a snort.

"Oh, you will."

Morgan Koerner

Untitled Skull

Raku-Fired Stoneware

Stephen Kohashi

Still Life

Oil on Canvas

Marcus Wohler

The Trials of Ned Masters

I.

From his work desk, Ned Masters watched the earth slip dishonorably into the sea. He witnessed, in real time, three wars, seven minor skirmishes, two political assassination attempts (one successful), one religious assassination (successful), the eruption of a volcano and the coming and going of twenty eight seasons at various points along the coast of east Africa, which lay roughly 8,000 miles from Ned's work desk, as the crow flies.

Between these events was tedium. Each day was different, he would remind in himself, though they appeared the same. At 0900 EST, Ned relieved Prudence McGarvey, a character about whom there is very little to say. (Ned knew her name from the tag she wore everyday to work.) For eight hours, he watched his fingers work below him at their task: tending a fleet of thirty satellites plus basic analysis of the images therefrom. Ned had grown old through his fingers. In the years since he joined the agency, he had watched them grown into shadows: gaunt, boney and spectral epiphytes clinging to the backs of his palms.

Ned's satellites were roughly the size of a breadbox, though Ned had never seen one in the flesh and did not own a breadbox to use as reference. Each unit cost in the neighborhood of $100,000, dwarfed by the multi-billion dollar price tag of the larger satellites employed by his agency, and they were much stealthier in the sky. From 300 miles above the earth, they could spot you mowing the lawn or judging your tie in the mirror.

Ned ate lunch at his desk. The desk comprised a faux wood veneer on top, polished iron frame and thin metal body that was the color of a clam. It was both vehicle and testament to his career, the trajectory of which increased, and promised to increase, like the graph of y = x and would peak out in thirty years between the positions of senior strategic and junior operational analyst, just in time for retirement with pension. Most employees ate together in the cafeteria, where there twined a significant social network, comprising clans of salaried analysts cooing to themselves in the presence of others to confirm and reinforce their analyses of others. What one is obliged to call language served no communicative purpose, Ned noted. It is possible to be less capable than one's genetic calling, but not more, he thought to himself.

At the aperture of the office was the agency seal, a circumpunct emblazoned with the agency motto: intelligenti informat actum. This apical valve opened to the cafeteria and to the greater world. Its gatekeeper was the manager. The manager was a former marines type. His appearance was defined by a razorsharp crew cut overtop a salt-and-pepper brush mustache that neatly divided his face, tight muscles peeking through office attire and, Ned imagined, aviator sunnies and a cigar that camouflaged his furrowed face in a little cloud. At the office pool, Ned once noticed, coiled around his forearm, a tattoo which read, Was ihn nicht umbringt…, and then disappeared around his thick ulnaris. This was the future, Ned's manager reminded him regularly; Ned was riding the wave onward.

II.

The algorithm divulged three new paths cut into the indigenous buffer zone, and two primitive encampments dotting the distant beach. Yesterday, there had been two new roads and a makeshift camp farther in and the day before a similar number of new roads, which, upon consultation of his notebook, proved to be four. Ned reported the developments to his manager and was informed there were no active hostilities or government expeditions sanctioned for that area.

Immediately, Ned suspected religious missionaries, who often embedded themselves like chiggers into the buffer before they were extracted by security forces or exterminated by the more hostile inhabitants of the buffer zone. Nonetheless, he found immediately, by pure chance, that the incursion was a graduate research expedition from Georgetown University, while on conference call with a contact with whom Ned had developed a very successful Solitaire algorithm in his free time. "Leave no trace," were the party's instructions, and, from the daily reports that Ned acquired without even the flash of a badge, they were convinced they transpired through the jungle with stealth. Yet, apparently their presence had rippled out, effecting a migration to the shores.

As days passed, the freckles of rude tents on the pink sand grew exponentially in number. From a thesaurus on coastal African nations, he learned the tribe inhabiting the area around the delta in question was the Tutukhuikape.

The Tutukhuikape [too-too-xwhee-kahpay] are an indigenous people of Tanzus. They are a largely uncontacted people living near the impassable mouth of the Paganum River delta on the perimeter of eastern Africa.[1] Tanzus's Procedural Resolution 676, issued 12 May 1978, appropriated an exclusive buffer area stretching approximately 17 kilometers around the location of the Tutukhuikape and other indigenous tribes.[2]

The Tutukhuikape are purely endogenous and wary of outsiders.[3,4] Nonetheless, poachers and security personnel within the buffer have had several tense encounters with the tribe, and found them to be peaceable.[5] A recent discovery of oil off the coast of the buffer has placed increased political pressure on the government of impoverished Tanzus to erode physical and legal barriers between the Tutukhuikape and the outer world, yet a variety of world leaders and celebrities have spoken out against such action.[6,7,8] As of 23 July 2016, Malgape administration officials were considering permitting off shore drilling, though, according to the president, incursion into the buffer zone was "out of the question.[9]"

Tribal Nomenclature

The name Tutukhuikape comes from a foundational tribal myth, told to researchers by the neighboring Akgape tribe. According to the legend,

"[a]fter defeating the universal evil, Makogral, and sending him

back into the sea, one of the heroes, the stoic Tutukhuikape, strode mutely to the edge of the water, changed himself into a dolphin as easily as changing clothes, and joined with the sea. He was seen again only rarely, presiding over the puckish waters of the Indian Ocean.[10]"

It is by this name that neighboring tribes refer to the people known as Tutukhuikape, though it is suspected that the Tutukhuikape lack a name for themselves, as their language consists entirely of signs and physical movements.[11]

Ned sought permission to report the disturbance to Georgetown University and was denied.

The Tutukhuikape were at Ned's mercy. Pushed slowly to the brink, they would commend themselves to the ocean before they faced modernity. Somehow he knew this, perceived it deeply. It could not be verified nor assessed for veracity, yet it pulsed obstinately through his every nerve. These twinges adumbrated great scale and vision: the Tutukhuikape were no relic of human simplicity nor pyx to prurient youth; Ned saw fear.

Great vision begs great action. Ned considered leaking the images to his academic contact. Never before had he contemplated opposing departmental policy, much less committing a federal crime. He had a bachelor's degree and a Master of Science from fine universities. He could find another job. But prison was prison. He could not consent to this evil, but, looking in the mirror, found himself disarmed to fight it.

These he balanced: the fate of a people and his code. Oh, what a curse – knowledge laid in fettered hands.

III.

Three days later, the tortuous road delved further into the buffer. The beach encampment appeared abandoned and allthemore silent on his screen. They had walked into the sea; he suffered the certainty. Perhaps they had made south with the current and landed down the coast. But the women! The children! The sun bled through the office window a pale and bloody orange.

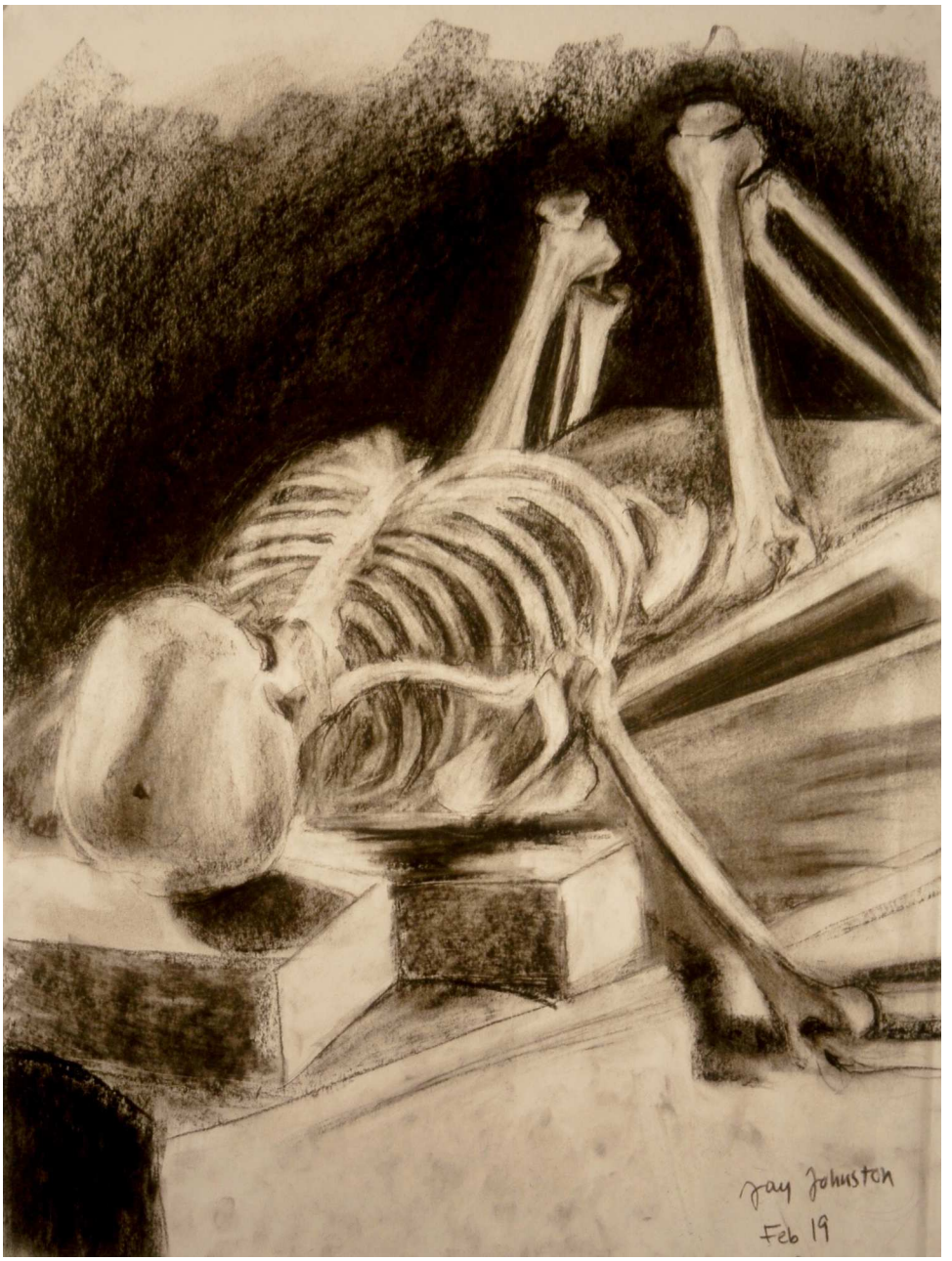
For the first time in his career, Ned left the office an hour early. His manager's mustache was buried in a report, and none other looked up as he passed through the sea of cubicles to the mouth of the hall, tucked into his coat, doffed his hat, and depressed the lighted elevator button that crescendoed to a soft ring.

Ned returned promptly at 1700 EST. The sunset and clouds formed a purple agreement with shades of pink and peach, and the river reflected this as if to say why not. As workers appeared, Ned walked to the end of the dock in a head-to-toe wetsuit with snorkel, sweating with conviction from his exposed skin. His face was framed by light and his mustache danced with the wind. As the scene attracted lingering eyes, Ned affixed flippers to feet and stepped to the edge, false rubber feet splaying out over the skin of the water.

He stuck the snorkel in his mouth, bent his knees, and flung himself. He arced in a mighty parabola before surrendering to the waves with a copious splash. He paddled out farther and farther, slowly at first but gaining speed, until the buildings behind him were only a grain of sand on a beach when the sun westered fully and died at last.

Jay Johnston

Repose



Charcoal

Meso Kim

Flamingo

Digital Art

Calliope Second Prize 2019 - ESL Poetry & Prose

Rabia Ahrar

Wishes Died

I am a flower in the garden of darkness,
No gardeners to give me some water,
I am a flower in the garden of hope,
I want everyone to be happy when they see me,
I am a flower, I have some smell and a natural view,
But, unfortunately, the farmers don't have noses,
I am a flower with nothing in my hands like thorns,
I wish the gardeners weren't cruel to me and cut my roots,
I am a flower which the gardeners leave outside the door,
I have hope even though I don't have any food,
I am a flower in the hot sun in a dry flower bed,
But, the gardeners become cruel and stop the water on my soul,
I am a flower in the yard of those who don't know me,
But, my roots don't have any special yard,
I am a flower which does not belong to just one garden,
But, my soul came from the Garden of Eden.
I am a flower like a human pluck me time to time,
But, I will fight with those who took my rights.

Calliope Third Prize 2019 - Poetry

Yumna Rahman

She is a Woman

She is a woman
The physically weak, emotional, inferior gender
The one that is just an ornament to consider
The imperfect creation that God made second
As a companion, not a helper, her own person, or a friend
But no!
She may be a woman, but she has an emotional handle
Men and women may not be identical, but they are still undeniably equal
She is a woman
The one who experiences the injustices that you don't see
And so, you don't believe
That what she feels is so real.
She is a woman
She is told that she doesn't belong
So, she thinks, and she believes that she was created all wrong.
She is told that her role is in her house and in her home
A role that is so damn important, but nobody knows
You take her for granted: "Oh! The one who cares for children."
She is the RNA of DNA, she does the work, but it's still hidden.
She is told to act prettily, talk sweetly, sit still
So that she can get married, beyond that she has no skill.
She is told she can't go out– she has no autonomy
Because she's always saddled as a mahram's responsibility.
"Don't travel alone, don't be out at night If you were boy, though, you would be all right."
She is told she must choose a job that is suitable
Not an eight-to-five one because her husband should be capable.
Not a doctor or an engineer because that will take all her time
From her family and the children she must bear in her prime.
Fine. Not science, how about liberal arts?
"Girl, you must be crazy. Those are jobs for a farce!"
But even with a job to please your every whim,
She won't be paid the same, though she worked just as hard as him.
She is told she cannot compete with you or join you in any fun.
She is told she must be wary, or her femininity will come undone.
Biology, biology she is bombarded with her biology
Now, because of all you told her, she can't talk to you objectively,

Can't make eye contact except bashfully,
Can't make friends with you because obviously she is nothing but her biology.
Forget her intellect, her willingness to contribute
To the society that binds her to a dependent attitude.
She is a woman
She is not seen to be anything but that.
The insignificant side character who is beginning her combat.
All she wants is to be treated with the same margin of respect
That rules "the man's world" but for a woman it's not impressed.
She is a woman
And so, some of you will feel "attacked"
When she speaks out about what men have done to her unabashed.
"Poems like this make me feel left out and excluded!
It makes all the guys feel like crap, it is so damn unsuited!
And why the hell is she feeling so angry and insulted?"
Sweetheart
If she were a Black man talking civil rights,
You would be cheering in complete compliance.
Because, although he attacks white men's sins,
You are not that white man, not the one who did those things.
So, she asks you this:
What makes her so different?
Are you that sexual predator who palmed her breast?
Are you the chauvinistic pig that treats her like an ornament?
Are the you the sexist man who considers her your subordinate?
Because a man like that is no real man at all
And if you feel "attacked" your hypocrisy appalls
You have cut your logic piece by piece
It applies to some, but to others it is weak.
Why, she is just another person fighting for equality!
In this society that seems to thrive on suppressing minorities.
Feminism is the women's civil rights
So, why does your ardor shy in the face of her plight?
She is a woman
The one that you've brushed aside
She is a woman
And she's sick of being nullified.

Calliope Third Prize 2019 - Nonfiction

Rachel Weaver

An Unusual Zen

Most people find it shocking that the most relaxing part of my life is simulating murder four times a week. There's this zen-like trance that comes with jiu jitsu that of course is different for everyone, especially myself. It's not the violent theme that draws me in, but the momentary explosive, unpredictable movements. Naturally I despise change, I can go weeks visiting one specific restaurant, listening to one specific song, etc. I despise surprise parties more than anything, so the need to know what's going to happen in advance of a situation has been a common theme in my life because I never know how to react. Controlling your body based purely on the reaction of the other person is the most important aspect that I've shockingly found comfort in. This back and forth flow between two people is largely unpredictable and anxiety ridden at first, but this is the driving force that forces me to stop gripping my comfort zone so hard my knuckles turn white.

Traveling back in time to a little over a year and a half ago, I couldn't have bowed into the mat without looking around at all the adult men in their perfectly tied belts in various colors, anxiously trying to subtly right my stiff, stark white one. I was brought into the gym by a friend of mine, promising each other we would try something new together. As long as we did this new scary thing together, I would be fine. Having someone suffering with me deafens the blows of change, especially in such a bizarre and new environment.

Dragging heavy feet into the doorway of the gym, my bag strap digging into my shoulder, I signed in on the iPad and went to change. My flip flops seemed deafening in the silent hallway leading to the locker room, but I could hear the music pulsing from the mat only a wall away. Pulling my gi sleeves down to my fingers like some kind of security blanket, I flip flopped my way into the next room, where I could already hear the slamming of bodies on the mat and the timer screaming to signal the end of a 5-minute round. Mentally preparing myself to go onto the bright red mat, I would come slightly early to the gym just to watch the higher belts spar. It was hypnotizing, the flow and sudden explosions of decisions is still to this day incredible to watch.

I'm a claustrophobic person on top of despising having no control, so this really set me back in my game. The second someone would sprawl on me, driving their entire body into mine, suffocating my vision and blocking out any light, I would tense up and wait for it to be over.

"Breathe, you have to breathe."

Every time I rolled with S, she would sweep me onto my back like I had the weight of a single sheet of college ruled paper. It seemed so effortless, a planted foot behind my heel and a snap of my gi to one direction, and I would be on my but in no time, the red mat swelling up to meet me. They call it the "white belt spazzism" because we don't know what we're doing. This lack of control and consistent unknowing weighed on my mind even outside of the gym. Instead of throwing in the towel, which I wanted to peg at the nearest person's face

sometimes, I bothered S with questions and relentlessly did the same to C whenever I could. Every Monday and Wednesday they would hop on the mat, still soaked with sweat from the advanced class, to quietly give me tips and tricks whenever our Coach had his back turned. It became our ritual, no matter how many people were between S and I, it was unspoken that she would be there for me to train with.

My goal wasn't necessarily to be a prodigy, but to roll with effortless ease as everyone else. Out of the blue, I graduated from a stiff white gi into S's competition Tatami. The rigid, blindingly white gi I had started in was cast into the corner of my closet. The worn, thick, jet black fabric of her Tatami flexes with my body perfectly. The back of it already has our gym's red and black patch sewn on, blending in perfectly to the dark color. I've always felt more comfortable in black, which I think I admitted to S literally once. It's a tradition for higher belts to hand down their old color to their friends at promotion ceremonies, but I've never heard of the same happening with a gi. She claims that it didn't fit her anymore and she needed to get rid of it, but Connor doesn't believe her no more than I did when she handed it down to me.

Nine months later, I'm still being reminded to breathe but now instead of a period at the end of this reminder, there's a comma.

"Breathe, fight back."

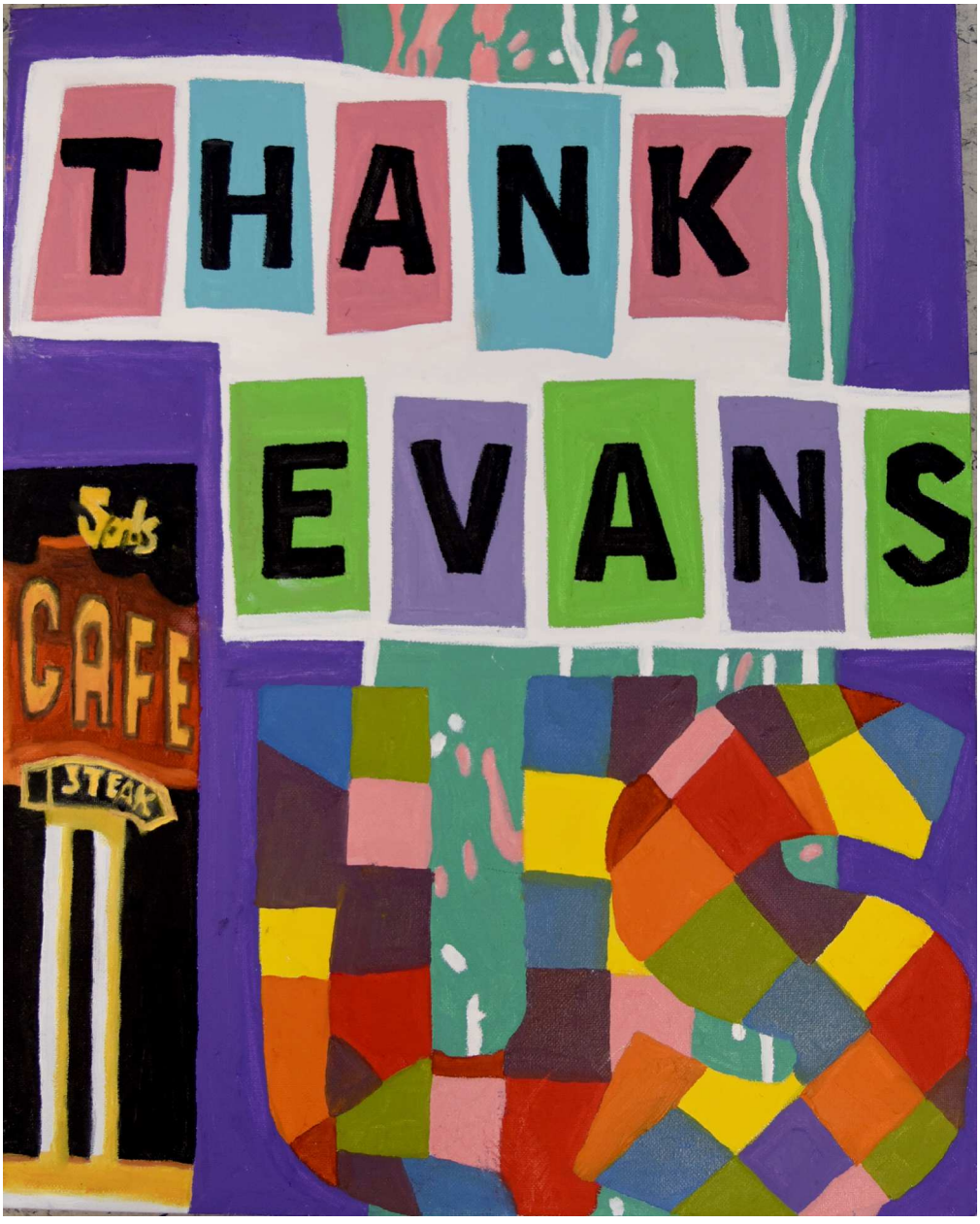
Slightly more willing, but still very much terrified, I would push back from her as she sprawled into side control or reach for a grip instead of hanging back playing defense. While warm ups still made me nervous of messing up, wrapped in Sarah's black Tatami gave me a sense of comfort. Instead of gluing my eyes to the person in front of me to be a cookie cutter of their movements, my eyes would be on the mat to avoid puddles of sweat left by the more advanced class. My body started to have a flow that I had envied nearly a year ago. I still had a death grip on my comfort zone, but my knuckles weren't snow white anymore. Of course, I didn't notice it, but there was a change.

My shoulders feel weightless as I leave, my white belt not so barren and white anymore due to the double strip around the end from our last promotion ceremony curls around my shoulders comfortably. My fingers are sore from the grips I dug them into on a collar, a bruise forming on my shoulder from throwing C, my neck aching from a double leg takedown, the high from adrenaline still present. S and C constantly remark about how I could beat up my past self easily whenever I doubt if I've made progress, but I would probably just tell her to breathe.

Everyone's journey is so different that it doesn't make sense to compare to others. Some people want to take home gold at competitions, others want to improve their mindset. Jiu Jitsu is definitely not a sport someone can walk into and be incredible at right off the bat. It weighs heavily on the body and especially the spirit, the only difference being those who rise to the challenge. I breathe when I roll and react to the other person's movements, space being created and closed with flow. There's absolutely no control involved, no panicked tension, just movement in reaction to other movement. It's weird how I've found this to be my meditation. John Welbourn put it very well when he said "Mental toughness is the accumulation of a lot of not quitting" because training jiu jitsu does not allow quitting. No shortcuts, no excuses, and remember to breathe.

Ron Eanes

Thank Evans



Oil on Canvas

Calliope Third Prize 2019 - Fiction

Alyssa Everett

Living With a Wolf

Disappointing. I come home from a monotonous and fruitless overnight stakeout to find my beautiful Mediterranean style home an utter mess. Oh well, what did I expect? Mark is overly fastidious about his own hygiene and clothes, but never concerns himself with tidying up shared spaces. He washes his shoes thoroughly every few weeks, using a toothbrush to clean every nook and cranny, and yet he leaves his dishes in the sink for days. I sigh as I open the door to the dishwasher.

Once I finish cleaning the kitchen, I head towards the bathroom to brush my teeth. As I walk in, I notice it is looking a bit dingy. The sink has toothpaste globs stuck to the side of the bowl, there are spots all over the mirror, and it looks like Mark didn't clean up after shaving his face again. My disgust with my surroundings births a cleaning bug in me, and I reach under the sink to grab cleaning supplies. I pull my phone out of my pocket. If I'm going to be awake for a while longer, I may as well chat with my best friend, Alex. I click the appropriate series of icons to dial her number and switch to speaker phone, then I place my cell on the counter. As I don a pair of latex gloves, I try to make a mental note that I'll need to buy more next time I go shopping. I feel like I just bought this box, but already there is only one pair left. The phone only rings twice before she answers.

Alex's voice blares out of the cell phone's speaker, "Hello?"

"Hey, it's Tammy. You have time to talk?"

"Always," she replies before delving into story-telling mode. She apparently had a very hilarious exchange with a cashier at the pharmacy today. At the summation of her tale, she asks me how I'm doing. I reply with a cliff notes version of the stakeout and express my dismay that despite all that I am still cleaning the house instead of sleeping. She starts to reply, but I don't hear what she's saying. Everything around me starts to get fuzzy, as if I'm going through a tunnel, and only one object is in focus. Squatting next to the bathtub, I raise my hand up towards the light to confirm what is pinched between my thumb and index finger – a long, red hair.

"I knew it, he's cheating on me!" I exclaim, interrupting Alex. I tell her what I just discovered. Being a platinum blonde with a pixie cut, I know with absolute certainty this red strand of hair is not mine.

Alex attempts to reassure me, "Are you sure it isn't from a friend of yours? Didn't Bea stay overnight last week?"

I recall having to tuck Bea into bed on the living room couch after she had one too many glasses of red wine during our book club meeting. We always start by having a scholarly discussion about the month's novel, but we are notorious for our ability to quickly transition towards drinking and laughter. It is possible the hair in question was from that night, but something doesn't feel right.

"You might be right. Anyways, I've got to run. I'll call you tomorrow." Alex responds

with her goodbyes, and I hang up the phone. I can't shake this bad feeling. After all, it's not just the hair. Mark has been acting strange for a while now. Staying at work late, showering more frequently, and his favorite blue button-down shirt has been missing. He told me the dry cleaners ruined it, but now I think he left it at that tramp's house. Tears start to well up in my eyes, but I shake it off. This is all subjective, there could be other explanations for these things. Besides, I am exhausted. I'll be able to process better after a good night's sleep.

A few days after finding the hair, nothing else suspicious has occurred, but I'm still having trouble going about my day as usual. I attempt to keep intrusive thoughts of infidelity at bay, but they seem to find their way to the forefront no matter what I do. At 4:24pm, my cell phone receives a text. It's Mark, he is going to be working late tonight. This is exactly the opening I have been looking for. I quickly slip on my shoes, grab my purse, and within minutes I'm out the door. I click the unlock button on my fob key as I walk towards my trusty Honda. Once I turn the ignition key, I realize I forgot to bring binoculars. I run back inside and find my way to the den. I recently asked Mark if he would store my binoculars in one of his desk drawers for me, so I begin opening each one. Most of the drawers are filled with office supplies, but the contents of one drawer surprise me. Resting on top of a stack of documents was a large, bulky knife housed in an intricate and beautiful leather shield. It looks old, and expensive. I wonder if he found it on one of our antiquing adventures and I never noticed. I move on to the next drawer, which is where I find my binoculars. I run back out to the car, carefully reverse out of the driveway, and head towards Mark's office.

Mark works as an accountant for a law firm, Jacobsen and Associates. His shift is supposed to end at 5:00pm. I arrive at 4:52pm and park half a block down on the opposite side of the street. To my dismay, I see Mark exiting the building at 5:08pm. I feel a lump in my throat as I pull out two cars behind him. He drives a few miles before arriving at a restaurant near Griffith Park. I park my car an adequate distance away and pull out my binoculars. Mark is waiting outside, he is clearly meeting someone. Moments later, a short brunette that arrives on foot walks towards him. My heart breaks into a million pieces as I watch them greet each other with a kiss before walking into the restaurant. I feel like such a fool. Of course he's cheating on me, all the signs were there. I am almost too emotional to properly operate a motor vehicle, but the thought of lingering here any longer is too much to bare. I turn the car on and head home.

Pacing back and forth, I try to decide how to handle this. Do I start screaming and accusing the moment he steps through the door? We have 14 years of marriage under our belts, do I want to throw that all away? I need more time to consider the best way to bring this up in the hopes we can get past it. Mark comes home at 8:56pm, and I act as if nothing has changed. I offer him some soup I made earlier. He happily accepts. We spend some time reading beside each other before heading off to bed.

Two Weeks Later

Instead of being in the field today, I am stuck at the LAPD office working on mountains of paperwork. This is not my favorite part of the job, but it comes with the territory. Sergeant Grey starts walking towards me with a file in hand. I've been here long enough to know this means my workload is about to increase.

"Detective Jones, I'd like you to take the lead on this case. I think we have a serial killer

on our hands. We found three female bodies in a shipping container last night. All three were stabbed to death. The bodies were bathed and redressed, there were signs of post mortem sexual assault. Same M.O. as two others found in the last three months. Detective Wilson was first on the scene, she has already gathered evidence but no witnesses have come forward." Sergeant Grey passes me the case file, and takes a seat in front of my desk. He finishes by adding, "I can't seem to find any relationship between the victims."

When I first open the file, I can't believe my eyes. One of the three victims found in the shipping container was the brunette woman I saw meeting Mark. Apparently, her name is Andrea Cole. I wonder if Mark knows she is dead. Among the documents detailing the evidence collected at the scene, there are coroner's reports for each victim, which are arranged alphabetically. First is Cole, Andrea. I quickly scan the contents of her report. Then I look over the details of Gray, Penelope. When I get to the next report, I almost faint. The entire world stops moving, my body is frozen. Lawson, Gloria – 5'8", 143lbs, 30 years old, has hazel eyes, and auburn hair. The file falls from my hands.

"Sir… I think I may have a suspect."

Poetry

Dounia Sabah

Fly

(Inspired by the Short story "Volar" by Judith Ortiz Cofer)

Supergirl is who I want to be
Transform into her body
Have her powers all for me
Jump into the night sky that's foggy

Blow away our landlords' money
Let it scatter through and through
X-ray vision to look into my neighbors and honey
The sky is where I flew

The fantasy fades
My body still the same
I remain my sleeping charades
Recall my flying dream in this waiting game

It's my parent's time together
Converse mother's desire to see her household
Wishing there was no tether
With love, father replies it would be financially bold

Mother checks the patience prayer Spanish written clock
Forty-five minutes have been claimed
"Oh, if only I could fly," she says staring out the small window block
If only we weren't chained

Min Jung Park

Self Portrait

Paper Cutout

Carito Landa

Untitled

Ink Drawing

Nonfiction

Gunther Thetard

For the Love of Rain

Instead of my alarm, it was the howling of the wind and the pounding of the rain that startled me awake this morning. It was nice. The sound of the rain being flung against the window immediately made me feel relaxed and at ease.

I always love the rain, at least when I'm inside or under cover. The smell is particularly wonderful. It always makes me feel nostalgic and draws me back to my childhood home in South Africa, a small town nestled in the foothills of the Drakensburg mountains. My family would often visit various farms in the surrounding area for weekend trips. There the rain would bring the whole region to life. Washing the dirt and the dust from everything it touched, the rain would reveal the vibrant colors of the vegetation. Even the usually dull and dry ground would turn a rich, deep brown, fertile and potent.

As wonderful as this memory is, I couldn't stay there forever. I had to get to class. This meant that I had to account for the more practical aspects of the rain, mainly getting wet. Fortunately, the rain wasn't falling that hard nor did I park far enough away from my first class that the rain bothered me. Yet, as I went from the CA building to the CC building, the rain was so ferocious that I was almost drenched by the time I arrived at the CC building.

The rain was cold that day. Unsated by my clothing it proceeded to gnaw at my body, driving the cold deep, down towards my bones. As if it wanted to take all my heat for itself. This was a selfish rain. In Malawi the falling rain only brings help.

During my teens my family lived in Malawi, the warm heart of Africa. This little country has most of its surface area covered in a body of water known as Lake Malawi, the third largest lake in Africa. Despite having such a close relationship to water, the country only sees rainfall for a short period of time known as the rainy season. The months preceding the rainy season become increasingly dry and hot. The earth begins to crack as it shrivels up. Fortunately, it is at this time that dark, somber clouds appear, heralding the approaching rain. These brooding clouds stoop over the land, contemplating whether to relieve themselves. Eventually, they relent, and the rain comes roaring down, uncompromising, as it covers every inch of the land.

As the rain drives the heat away, months of frustration are also driven away. Every creature is overjoyed that they no longer must shelter from the sun and the heat. The air becomes thick with the sounds of birds and insects.

I am grateful for the rain here in NOVA, it carried me home.

Fiction

Syeda Ebad

A Night That Changed Everything

You could have saved him, the words on the wall in front of him read.

"You could have saved him," he read the words aloud. "You could have…" His mind was going insane by now. As if he was not feeling guilty already, these words started haunting him even more. The evocative words up ahead took him back to the terrible memories of that night; the night that changed everything; the night when that wretched accident took place that took his best friend away from him, forever. Not a day had passed when he had not felt the pain his best friend went through. But wait, how could I possibly feel that pain? After all, I was the one who let Jacob die that mysterious night, right?

He woke up, huffing and puffing. A nightmare? Again? Do I deserve THIS? But then again, did Jacob deserve THAT? Beads of sweat glistened on his radiant forehead. Silky, brown hair covered the top of his forehead, and his slightly parched lips demanded some water. His breathing was rapid. 3:30 a.m., the clock ticked constantly. An awful, pin-drop silence surrounded his bedroom. It was drizzling, and stray canines were groaning outside. He reached out for the glass of water that was on his bedside table. He felt better, but the previous uneasiness had once again stepped inside his bedroom to ruin the aura of peace.

After breakfast the next morning, his dad had already left for work when his mom asked him to go grocery shopping.

"Sam, honey, my legs hurt. Do you mind buying some groceries for dinner tonight?" He just stared into space. "Sam…?" No response. "Samuel, what's wrong with you?"

"Uh, wh-what?" He was out of his trance.

"Son, why are you always zoned out? Okay, listen to me. Look, I know you were driving the car that night, but that doesn't mean it was your fault that Jacob didn't survive that accident.

Don't get me wrong: I am very sorry for what happened, but you have to understand that life does not stop when someone dies. You have to get normal and resume your life. Not only are you playing with your health, but you're also hurting us, indirectly. Your dad and I just want to see you happy, my son. It's been a month ever since..." Emotions were spilling out of her eyes by now. She wiped her tears with the back of her hand, before taking Samuel's hands into her own. "Come on now! Take my car and go to the grocer's right now. You barely go out, and that's why you get all these disturbing thoughts accumulated in your head. No whining; come on!" Sam murmured something before grabbing the car keys and heading towards the garage.

He was stuck in traffic for half an hour. However, he was upset more than he was

annoyed. Apparently, a terrible accident had occurred across the road, and no one was allowed nearby. The word "accident" had the audacity to bring back the horrible memories of that night. A film started playing in his head, and time stopped. His mind had already taken him back to National Highway, where the accident took place that night; the night that changed everything.

Elk Valley High School had arranged a farewell party for seniors that evening. It wasn't the last school day for the graduating students; it was only meant to divert their attention from the pre-college anxiety that empowered many. Their graduation ceremony was supposed to be held a few days after the farewell party. Jacob and Sam, both dressed in three-piece suits, looked handsome as always. Sam wore a white dress shirt, navy blue waistcoat and suit, with black shoes to complement his outfit. Jacob, on the other hand, opted out for black that evening. From his dress shirt to suit to shoes, everything was black, except for the red bow that was tied with the collar of his dress shirt. "Dressed to kill," he winked at Sam with a visible smirk forming on his face. The party was great. They spent time socializing, chatting with friends, and dancing to their hearts' content.

It was already decided beforehand that Sam would be dropping Jacob home, since Jacob's car was at the mechanic's. They left before everyone else because one of Sam's inexplicable headaches cropped up. Jacob knew how to lighten up the atmosphere in the car by cracking random jokes. The jokes were not even that funny; it was Jacob's heaving cartoon-like laughter that helped lighten up the situation a little bit. He would always laugh at his own jokes and brag about how 'humorous' he was.

Sam broke one of the headlights of the car, a few days ago, by hitting a pole while driving. He was lazy to have the car repaired, but he knew he would definitely get it repaired before his graduation ceremony.

Now, speeding down the lane with his broken headlight, Sam approached the steep slope that he and Jacob had ridden together over countless times since they were kids - throwing their hands up as if they were on a roller coaster when one of their mothers went over it at a responsible speed. Only this time, Sam's foot was a bit too heavy on the accelerator, and a bit too many laughter tears blurred his vision as he hit the curve. He crashed into a tree so badly that the windshield was completely shattered, except for a few fragments of glass that were dangling and hanging on to the car for dear life.

"Come on, let's get out!" Sam was quick to assess the smoke coming out of his car.

"Quickly, Jacob!" He yelled as soon as he was at a safe distance from the car.

"My hands...I can't unfasten my seatbelt." Panic was clear in Jacob's voice. Pieces of broken glass had injured his palms and fingers during the crash, while he was trying to shield his face.

"Wait, I'm…" Before Sam could finish his sentence and go help Jacob, the car burst into flames. Fate had deceived Sam. Everything was gone. Jacob was gone.

"Beep beep!" The car behind him honked, and it was enough to bring Sam out of his stupor. The police were clearing the area after the accident; luckily, everyone had survived. Jacob could've survived too if… His mind was about to overpower his senses once again. He let go of his thoughts before driving down the lane to OK Supermart.

The market was awfully tidy. He checked out a shopping cart before heading towards the

potatoes' section, scrutinizing their quality. He looked up while putting the potatoes in his cart. That moment was enough to make him feel unwell. In front of him stood Mrs. Spencer, Jacob's mom. Sam remembered her as an elegant, pretty, and a young woman with sharp features and long brown hair. However, at the moment, she looked feeble than ever, with her hair tied in a messy bun. It seemed as if her slender legs were struggling to support her tall physique. Jacob's parents had forgiven him, since they did not want to inflict pain on Sam's parents and make them go through the trouble of staying away from their child. Sam did not have the courage to even look at her. After all, he had snatched her only son away from her.

Sam was unable to stay in the market for long, so he decided to pay for his items before rushing home. Even during the car ride, he could not stop thinking about Mrs. Spencer. What he did to her was terrible, and something that no mother should ever have to go through. How could he redeem himself? It was getting harder for him every day. He wanted to get rid of everything - the nightmares, haunting memories, and Jacob's image in his head. There was only one way to put an end to everything, and he knew how to deal with it.

As soon as he reached home, he dropped the bag of groceries on the kitchen counter and headed upstairs. He closed his bedroom door before approaching the brown study table in one of the corners. He reached out to a nicely framed photograph of him and Jacob. Sam was trying not to laugh at a joke Jacob had made in that picture, while Jacob was looking cheerfully at his best friend's face. How happy were those days! Sam smiled sadly before walking up to his bed, still holding the frame tightly against his chest. He sat down and opened one of the drawers of his bedside table. He dug through the papers and took out a black pistol. It was time to put an end to everything that had been bothering him. He looked at the gun and that photograph, simultaneously. He pulled the trigger. A sound echoed in the room, along with the words "You are avenged, Jacob. You are avenged."

Ray Hawkins

Glacier Globes

Digital Art

Poetry

Jack Parise

The Landscape Artist

I have stood salt-kissed on the shore in August
In a cold fog far northeast of here
And took a hog-hair brush in one hand
And painted

I have walked three miles in a white desert
And dug feet in snow until my skin charred blue
Tilting up my head against a salmon-sunset roasting
Until black, sautéed with stars

I have forded mossy waters through deep oceans
That beat drum-like through wooden decks
And chant to me through cracks of waves
Storming

I have knelt down in a nest of leaves and gazed
Upon the body of a faun, dirt-dusted
And had my pencil forge out every contour
Until the sun lowered again

I have crawled head-bowed towards boiling darkness
Handprints pressed on moistened rock
And felt in old caves jagged teeth of stone
Pushing up towards God

I have turned my eyes from the blazing sun
And wiped a sweat-slick rag across my neck
As clouds of sand and glass licked my lungs
And bit down

I have drawn the peak
Of the highest mountain
And thought
Of home

Poetry

Margie Wildblood

Pastoral Scene

Tall grass swaying back and forth,
Beckons to a private, hidden place.
Sun-warmed, lush green carpet
Dotted clusters of daisies, bluebells.

Tractor hums in a distant field,
Billowy puffs of dust mark its path.
Black sedan rambles along lonely road,
Driver blind to the world outside.

Faded blue jeans tossed aside
Like a half-raised tent standing guard.
Lustrous pink shirt nearby,
Collapsed like a pricked balloon.

Crows caw from an oak tree,
Its limbs lifting and falling
With the wind, whispering
Soft applause on the scene below.

Naked innocence unveiled,
Glazed green eyes trancelike
At the blue cloudless sky
Watching from above.

Slender neck ringed in raw red,
Lifeless face turned upward
For a glimpse of heaven
As she died.

Carol Duong

House

Raku-Fired Stoneware

Nonfiction

Jose Garcia

Homecoming

The moment we had all been talking about was finally here. We had spent months thinking about all the different types of food we would devour, the copious amount of alcohol we'd consume, and the loved ones we would hold.

Usually when we heard the words "Give me ten" you'd see everyone put their heads down and slouch where they were sitting as if somehow that made them temporarily invisible. Those three words struck fear in many; you knew if you were one of those unfortunate ten, you'd be the only ones working while everyone else sat around and did nothing. Today was different; today we were leaving Afghanistan and going home. So, everyone volunteered to go outside and help load the plane with all the gear, regardless of the unforgiving cold temperature.

It's always a rare sighting to see so much happiness in such a large group of Marines. We had this uncanny ability to "embrace the suck" making us experts at pretending to be happy in the worst of situations. This flight was a complete one-eighty from the flight we took 9 months ago. Even those whom were sleeping had smiles on their faces that told a different story. My smile came from knowing exactly what I was going to do the second I got off the plane. I couldn't wait to see her beautiful face, hold her, and remind her how much I loved her. I was going to sling my rifle on my back, drop my bags, and push through the crowd to find her. I had seen this in a few movies before so, I knew exactly what to do.

She was all I thought about for months and finding words to describe my excitement seemed impossible. The plane finally landed on American soil; we quickly unloaded the plane and rushed to our buses. Our estimated time of arrival was a little over forty- five minutes and I couldn't wait to have her in my arms. The closer the bus got to the base the more I began to sweat. There's no way this twenty degree North Carolina weather had anything to do with it; the only possible reason for this is how uncontrollably nervous I was. We finally parked; the doors opened and you could hear the voices of family members echo through the bus. Signs were being waved in the air and tears hit the floor as we made our way into the arms of our loved ones. I had rehearsed this in my head over and over; I knew exactly what to do the second my feet touched the ground. As seen on T.V; I slung my weapon to my back and pushed my way through the crowd to find her.

An unexplainable heat traveled through my body and my heart beat faster than a cheetah chasing its prey. There she was. Her eyes looked like a dam that was on the verge of over flowing. She looked even more beautiful than I had imagined and we each took a second to look at each other to confirm this was real. As we held each other I could feel her tears against my cheeks. She scrambled to put words together as I held her and reassured her how much I missed her. The moment I had talked about for

months was finally here. I was with the one person who made me feel at home.

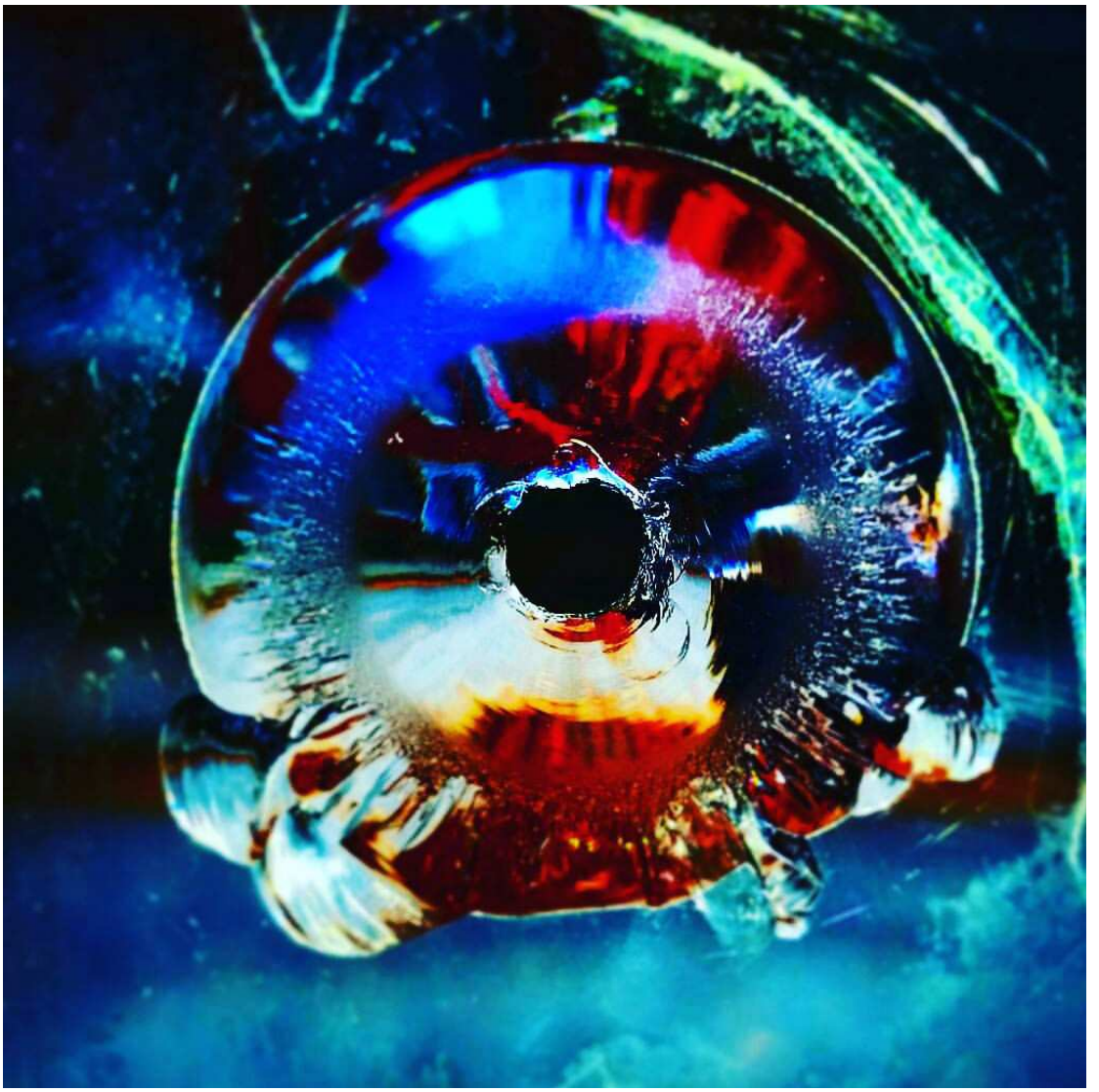
As the now empty bus made its way back to the airport, I found myself wanting to go back with it. This place I've called home for years seemed unfamiliar. It was still green anywhere you turned due to the unpredictable and unwanted rain that poured down every other day. The loud sounds that echoed through the entire city at the most inconvenient hours from the aircraft that was constantly in the air were still the same. Her touch, face, smell, eyes, and voice was exactly as it was before I left. Yet, I felt like a stranger in my own backyard.

The air was no longer dry, the roads were no longer cover in sand, and the smell of human feces no longer lingered through the air. That unforgiving smell came from the famous "Shit Creek" the only body of water we had in miles created by the dumping of the blue waters from Porto Potties. It was the only place where you can see plants grow. I now got to sleep with one person the most important person in the world to me. Yet, the thought of not saying goodnight to my six roommates and closing my eyes hoping we didn't wake up to the obnoxious sound of sirens frightened me.

That empty bus was a reminder of the silent mutual agreement we had made with the Marine Corps. One in which we were never allowed to get attached to anyone or any place. One where we understood that the minute we felt like calling somewhere "home" it had the right to remove you from it. She didn't care about that agreement because she did not have to abide by these unwritten rules. She made her own and in her set of rules. As long as she was around I always had a place to come back to with a sense of belonging. She was patient and understanding that in her arms, I'd always have a home.

Mark Loughran

Untitled



Digital Art

Kyra Benson

Fish

Oxidation-Fired Stoneware

Poetry

Margie Wildblood

September 9, 2017

Just an hour ago
she told him she loved him
and he whispered weakly, "love you, too."
She stood by him, stroked his thin
white hair, caressed his bushy
eyebrows which he never
trimmed. (They gave him character,
he always said.) Remembering
brought a smile to her face. She caressed his
lips that she had kissed passionately for
years. Hungry for his touch, she wished she could
crawl inside his skin to make them
physically one.

Nurse arrived to check his vitals.
"I believe he's passing now. I can't get a pulse." His eyes
open in narrow slits, she watched their light die.
Gone in an instant.

Waiting for the mortician, she pushed her
arms under his back, encircling him, laid her head
on his shoulder for what she knew
was the last time.
The mortuary attendants arrived. They
wrapped his frail frame from head to toe tag in
white sheets. His sweet face
disappeared forever.

She walked behind him like an honor guard
to the hearse, watched as he was rolled in
beside another. Door shut, condolences accepted. They drove
away. She watched the tail lights
fade around the corner into darkness. She stood
in the humid September evening staring up at
a black starry sky.

The love she had longed for and found was

gone. She walked into the
empty house.

Eileen Liang

Bowl

Raku-Fired Stoneware

Poetry

Lona Valeria Hill

Let's Get Together

Take and give. Push and pull.
Yin and yang. Up and down.

Me and you. We are different.
We are similar. Together,
Fitting perfectly.

With out hesitation I am yours
I give all that I am to
You.

Nonfiction

Nicole Carmanico

Negative Space

I stood before a crowded room with hundreds of teenage faces looking at me. Teachers I recognized from years ago lined the corners of the auditorium; I hoped they were attending by choice, but I knew the more likely scenario was that this was a mandatory assembly. No actual interest drove any of these kids to be here, besides the fact that it would get them out of class for an hour. Most of them sat with their heads down and thumbs flying. They could not be bothered to acknowledge my existence, and honestly, I didn't blame them. I was a former student they didn't know and had no personal connection to. Who was I to walk into their territory and give them a speech on anxiety? What did I know? I was seemingly put together, with a clean, professional outfit and hair that was uniformly sleek. I did my makeup this morning, brushed my teeth, and made it here on time. That wasn't their image of someone riddled with anxiety. I was not the disheveled husk of a person they were expecting, which in their minds, gave me no credibility. And again, I didn't blame them.

The lights dimmed to a soft, golden glow that illuminated their faces like tiny halos. White lights lit up on the front of the stage and further emphasized my presence. The lighting change prompted some of them to look up. I watched a few click the power button and lock their phones, slipping them away into jacket sleeves and backpack pockets. I felt 100 teenagers and 200 eyes looking at me, but I felt no twinge of anxiety. No hint of self-doubt tugged at my conscious, no negative thoughts creeped in through the holes left by my own insecurities. My face was dry with the absence of nervous sweat and my heart beat at a steady, unnoticeable pace. I was secure in my own head because my anxiety was not triggered by public speaking. Standing before a crowd didn't phase me. I wondered if any of these students would believe me when I told them I had crippling existential anxiety.

"Hello, students of Langley High," I said into the microphone. My words crackled as the microphone adjusted to new soundwaves. I raised the stand and stood closer to the mic.

"Thank you for being here, although I understand you probably didn't have a choice in that matter." I smiled at them and none of them smiled back. I saw one girl sitting in the front row who leaned forward in her seat, like she actually cared to listen. I spoke to her when I talked.

"Today I wanted to talk to you about something I'm sure you have all struggled with at some point; anxiety." I clicked a button on my tiny remote and a white screen unfolded from the ceiling. I clicked another and the phrase Why? was projected on the screen in a big, red font.

"Why?" I said aloud. I paused for a few seconds and tried to take everything in; I wanted to feel invested in this moment or else they never would.

"Why does anxiety matter? Why does it go unacknowledged, in schools and sometimes at home, for far too long?" I looked at them and they looked at me, waiting for me to say something they haven't heard ten times before. I stared hard at the crowd of impressionable students and tweaked my narrative.

"I know you all probably think I have no idea what I'm talking about. I don't have a GPA to worry about, I don't need to register for classes and I no longer have to wonder if my dream school will accept me." Some of their eyes lost their dullness and they looked remotely interested. I breathed out slow and prepared to tell them my own secret.

"If you think I'm unqualified to talk about anxiety because I don't endure those struggles anymore, you'd only be half right. Yes, I don't deal with the stressors of high school anymore. But other thoughts, terrible thoughts, seep into my mind at night and keep me up until sunlight puts an end to the night. I know how it feels to have your heart race and hands shake with fear. Only difference is, my anxiety is stimulated by other ideas." I stopped to catch my breath because I noticed it had started to get choppy. I was close to revealing something I never liked talking about. Even mentioning it was enough to fuel the bad thoughts and give them enough momentum to send me into a full-blown panic attack. I pushed away the hot, sharp fear that was climbing up my throat.

"I deal with existential anxiety. For those of you that are unfamiliar with it, it's the fear of viewing things on a larger scale. It's the inability to look at the big picture without wanting to zoom in again. It's worrying about if my actions are meaningless, and whether my fate is predetermined. It consists of long nights of lying awake, wondering what the fuck I'm doing here of all people. Questioning why I deserve a shot at this life and the chance to change someone else's. Sorry for the profanity, but it had to be said because I knew it would catch your attention." I put the mic back in the stand and looked up; I hadn't realized I had been looking at the girl in the front the whole time.

I stopped to check for clearance on the teachers faces. I was very surprised when I saw their mouths upturned in a half smile rather than a scolding straight line. I felt my own mouth struggling to express my content, but I didn't smile yet.

"Some days, hell, MOST days, I wonder why I'm here," I said, my words falling cleanly out of my mouth, unplanned but articulate.

"I contemplate the reason for my existence, as well as all of yours. I wonder why I wake up in my bed, in my house, in this city, and how that all came to be. I worry that my future has been decided, and I am idly living out a destiny I didn't choose. Even when I know I'm in control, I wonder if its an illusion to make me think I have some semblance of choice in my life. My head is like a washing machine with a million thoughts tumbling around and colliding with each other. It's during times like these that I have to remember to flip the off switch on my mind and let my thoughts pass through."

Two hundred eyes glittered up at me in a thousand different color combinations. The girl who paid me attention first had rich hazel eyes, with rings of gold circling the pupil. A boy who I thought didn't care now watched me intently, his eyes sparkling a

cerulean hue. Teachers with green eyes who had seen more life than me watched my every move with an unexpected interest. Identifying the different colors helped ground me and revive my lost senses. I got so wrapped up in my own words that I had forgotten to take a breath, hear their shuffling, feel the warm air. I closed my eyes for a second and drifted back down to earth like paper floating in the wind. I opened my own brown eyes and they were all still there, waiting.

"My point is," I said, swallowing hard and lubricating my next words, "sometimes we feel like our anxiety is stronger than us. But it's not. You give it life by investing time in negative thoughts. It's okay to struggle with finding peace. Learning to be okay with not being okay isn't easy. But try and remember that anxiety is like film; it develops in the dark. It thrives on negative spaces and can make a droplet of uncertainty turn into an ocean. But if you remember to let the light in, it will not grow. It will not develop, and it will fade away. You are not your thoughts."

I clipped the mic back into the stand and looked at my audience. They were tranquil and all smiling, every one of them. I crouched down to their level and made myself their equal, a silent and mutual understanding flowing between us that did not need words.

Evelyn Garcia

Portrait

Paper Cutout

Poetry

Marina Kessenich

Him

To watch the baby's face while he slept
dreaming primitive dreams
binary weaving into fresh flesh…

It feels like a dream.
Babyhood.
Motherhood.

My entire life was swollen,
as swollen as his baby cheeks.

I sat...
fat
disheveled
a shell of myself but
the embodiment of woman

leaking milk like a broken faucet
I smelled sour
I was always wet
And because we were one, so was he.

Damp and spoiled onesies
getting tight.

We slept in a puddle
him nestled in the crook of my arm
staring and pawing at my face.

Me:

A crib
pacifier
mobile
rocking chair
stroller

an all in one made of flesh
(cracked and stretched)
and sentience.

Him:
A dream.

David Lam

A Familiar Sight

Graphite on Bristol Board

Diann Gully

Self Portrait in Tea Leaves

Mixed Media

Poetry

Gretchen Dietrich

Poppy Seeds

empty bottle
Label faded
Pain persistent
Slowly at first
Constantly struggling
More and more until I dive off
The shallow end turns deep
Wading in and out of short breath
Breaking into the light
Face to face with the surface of death
Once an abundance
Now there is no more
Once used for good
Now taken too far

Nonfiction

Ryan Ruiz

Forward-Looking: From Sea to Soccer to Success

The Caribbean breeze blew through the coconut trees as the waves crashed upon the white sandy shore. This was a simple time where children played outside till sunset and parents screamed to get them inside. It was different than today's society where children's eyes are glued to electronic devices. Soccer was a staple in all households in Trinidad & Tobago, and especially during those times, when our own local talent, Dwight Yorke, played in the English Premier League for the renowned club, Manchester United. He was from humble beginnings and through his abilities became one of the best players, leading the team to multiple championships including the Premier League title, FA Cup and UEFA Champions League in one year which is a rare feat even today. As a child, I pretended to be him, playing soccer, wearing my homemade shirt with his number and became the biggest supporter of Manchester United.

My love for soccer and the team continued throughout my life, though my own abilities did not take me to the international soccer stage. However, our lives seemed to share a similar path as I also left the serene Caribbean life in search of international opportunities. I moved to the U.S. one year ago in pursuit of my goal to become an engineer. My personal quest and support for Manchester United aligned when the team visited Maryland within my first month of moving to the U.S. I felt this was a sign from a much higher being, that I had traded in the roar of the Caribbean Sea for the roar of the stadium crowd. Though my team did not win, it felt as if they were there welcoming me to the U.S. I felt that this was a sign that my own journey from humble beginnings to this international stage would provide me with new opportunities, adventures and most of all my dreams.

My move to the U.S. was not an overnight decision but one that was over ten years in the making. As with immigration cases, there are processing timelines, status updates and tons of documentation requests. At the end of the process, I was certain that my sister would become an immigration attorney. She was always reading up on the websites to make sure we had completed all the paperwork, filed on time and were well prepared for our interviews. Maybe she felt the separation more than me, as she had to fill the role of our parents as I was younger.

Our parents got the opportunity to move to the U.S. when my elder brother became an American citizen. He served in the U.S. Air Force and went to war in Iraq after September 11, 2001. There were countless night worrying if he would return safely, as he was never able to contact us and tell us any details about his mission. Luckily, he returned safely to the U.S. and after a few years helped my parents to move there with him, though this left my sister and I behind. This was not an easy decision for our family, but one where all the benefits were assessed. My parents were working class and

there were limited options for their career growth and the foreign exchange rate meant greater buying power and a better life. I remember the first holidays when my brother and parents were in the U.S. with my sister and I in the Caribbean. We did not have smart phones or laptops then, so we exchanged our Christmas greetings on an old-fashioned telephone. They described living in the U.S. with the huge buildings and highways, much larger than anything we had back home. We laughed and shared stories but there was always the underlying tone of sadness that we were not able to be together as a family.

Family was always important to us, we knew the five of us together could get through anything. We did not have much but we had memories. We used to celebrate every birthday and holiday because we understood the importance of sharing moments. That Christmas was just the first of many of the special moments we did not spend together; as birthdays, graduations, weddings and additions to the family were shared via pictures and calls. However, our experiences seem to be a luxury in today's society where there are reports of immigrant parents being separated from small children who are kept in cages. I know each immigrant's story is different, with what they left behind and what they came searching for, but I feel that the American dream is always at the center of it. For immigrants, this is the promise of a better life, more opportunities and access to better healthcare and education. It is the promise of a better tomorrow for you and future generations. Though my family did not experience any horrific treatment, separation has a toll, some life moments you do not get back and time waits for no man.

Though I loved soccer, I never felt that it was a career option for me. I was a good player but nothing like the special few who dedicated all their time practicing and working on their skills. There was also too much uncertainty, whether your body can handle the stress, having the right connections and getting the opportunities. In this environment, one serious injury can be career ending. This was something I made peace with and found my own passion in logic and problem solving through my classes in mathematics and physics. These subjects are the foundation for technology today and have transformed the world right before our eyes. My memories with the old-fashioned telephone used to call my family when we were apart was quickly replaced with a smart device that allowed video calling through the internet. It was amazing to witness the changes and seemingly have the world at your fingertips. I knew I wanted be involved in a field that would continue to make changes to our everyday lives. Electrical engineering offers the ability to specialize in a variety of fields including telecommunications, robotics and computers. The U.S. is leading in these efforts and having the prospect to go to school and work there would be critical for my success in this field. Soon enough my opportunity came when my immigration paperwork was approved and I held my ticket to travel to the U.S.

The "forward" position in soccer is the most high-profile as the player is expected to score the goals for the team. Dwight Yorke played the forward position during his time at Manchester United and led the team to multiple victories. As I boarded the plane, I felt that I too was in a forward position, there were expectations from my friends, fam-

ily and myself to achieve my goals and help my family have a better life. I held on tightly to my seat handles as the plane took off to my future. I felt both nervous and excited as at the end of the flight our family would be reunited and I would be one step closer to pursue my goal. As the luggage circled around the conveyor belt, I heard my name shouted out, as I turned around, there they were, my mother, father, brother with his wife and kids running towards us. My sister cried as we all made our way together and gave a sign of relief that we were reunited again. The separation was over, our new journey was beginning and most of all we had to celebrate. As a surprise to the family, my brother got us all tickets to see Manchester United play. I could not believe it. A team that I thought I would never see beyond the glass of my television screen would be in front my eyes. So as the crowd cheered for Manchester United in Maryland on that warm summer day in 2017, my family and I cheered at the top of our lungs not only for the game in front of us but for all the hurdles we overcame. As I watched my family laugh and truly celebrate this moment, I felt all expectations leave me. At that moment I remembered the fundamental rule of soccer that it is a team sport and there is always someone there to support you and help you score the goal. In my heart I felt lucky that I had my own team here to support me on this new journey and together we would be able to accomplish anything.

Nuran Cicek

Behind the Window

Collage

Jiho Baek

Strange Sighting with Slow Jazz

Digital Art

Poetry

Hailey Lanford

Full Woman

I am a full woman.
Full of curves and beauty and grace.
I am a full woman, draped in loose clothing, laced in love, dipped in chocolate.
I am a full woman, who has been touched by man and left to rot,
left out to the dogs to feast upon on late nights.
I am a full woman who will scream and yell until the moon shines bright,
until we are both full in the darkness.
But who will also cry at the sunrise.
I am a full woman who breathes words into a man's ear only for them to
creep right out the other side,
Disregarded and meaningless.
I am already a full woman, but yet he will never see me as such.
He will whisper through the dark
to tell me he can't wait for me to be a "full woman".
He can't wait to make me a full woman.
I am a full woman, who is sometimes too timid to take risks, a bit too cautious,
who gets scared and insecure and worried.
I am a full woman who was stopped in her tracks
by the words of a boy who did not mean what he spoke,
Did not understand the power of his words,
did not look me in my eyes to see how I felt.
He did not like the outcome of this full woman saying no.
No to the thought that he could make me full,
no to the idea that only with him I am whole and glorious and wonderful.
He did not like my outburst and my yelling and screaming towards the moon,
he only liked the full woman that faced him in his imagination.
His own fantasies.
I have been a full woman long before him, and I will be one long after he is gone.
I am a full woman full of curves and beauty and grace,
full of insecurities and worries and sorrow,
full of love and self-worth,
draped in clothing that is skin tight and laced with scars,
dipped in tears and emotions,
full to the brim with sinew and strength.
I am a full woman.

Poetry

Julianne Bieron

Okay, Google

"What's today?"
"What's the weather?"
"What type of wood supports the most weight?"
"What does an oak tree look like?"
"Are there oak trees in Northern Virginia?"
"Play 'Leave Out All the Rest' by Linkin Park."
"What type of rope supports the most weight?"
"Where can I buy nylon rope?"
"What's the strongest knot?"
"Call mom."
"Cancel the call."
"Play 'Numb' by Linkin Park."
"What would happen if I drink wine with Xanax?"
"Where can I buy good red wine?"
"Is overdosing painless?"
"What's the least painful way to die?"
"Call mom."
"Cancel the call."
"Play 'Paralyzed' by NF."
"Why do I feel like I want to die?"
"Is there help for suicidal thoughts?"
"Is there a cure for suicidal thoughts?"
"Do mental hospitals keep you against your will?"
"Where's the nearest hospital?"
"How much traffic is there to the hospital?"
"Call 1-800-273-8255."
"Erase all my searches for the past twenty-four hours."

Nuran Cicek

Reflection

Photograph

Poetry

Marina Kessenich

You, Me, and Mary

Amalgamation
A word that reminds me of you
From your mouth I've heard it most said
Perhaps because Frankenstein has been
A constant theme
In this relationship

You, Me, and Mary Shelley

You sat next to me on my bed, propped
Comfortable in demeanor, in my company
From your lips Mary spoke to my hesitant writer's heart,
You a vessel, a willing participant,
Facilitator, eloquent in her words
She explained the conception of a novel,
The labor of an author,
As if you both spoke to encourage us

Amalgamation
A friendship born from seperate Resurrections,
We come to each other,
Our own sets of partially polished patchwork
Pointing to each stitch,
We say how it got there
And sew ourselves together a little bit
Traumas and triumphs
Shared and compared
As if a spell,
God working through you
And Gaia through me
Heavenly Father
Earthly Mother,
Is cast.

Two souls bound by honest incantations
Muttered as we pass the bowl back and Forth
Wooden spoon folding together
Flour, chocolate, and kinship or Camaraderie
As it bakes and solidifies in the oven
So does the definition of us
Me to You,
You to Me

And at the ceremonies end
We take communion
Cookies and coffee

Amalgamation
You are composed of a myriad of memories
Reiterated to me, sometimes repeatedly,
But I don't mind, that's part of getting to Know someone
A watch fixed by a cashier in a Chinese Restaurant,
Long trip to Iowa
Depression, death, and heartbreak
"Wantin ain't gettin"

But I wanted a friend like you and I got one
So make what you will of that

You are black clothes, canned food,
kindness, irritability,
protestant, articulate,
griever, prevailer,
rarity
Victor

Amalgamation
You are ALIVE
Friend
And so am I

Xiaoyu Lei

Untitled

Oil on Canvas

Poetry

Lauren McDonald

Lisa Gherardini

How could I smile
After the argument that we had
How could I smile
Knowing that he was so mad

How could I smile
And go about my day
How could I smile
With still so much to say

I dressed in all black
Just like Leo instructed
I sat in a chair
While my portrait constructed

My mind wandered off
As the canvas near finished
I sat still for so long
My poor energy diminished

I thought of him the whole time
My face must have been vile
I told Da Vinci "I'm sorry"
"I'm not in the mood to smile"

Northern Virginia
Community College